



BINGANG

**January—June
1986**



BINGANG

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF CLUB CROSBY FOUNDED IN 1936
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Membership in Club Crosby is open to all collectors who wish to help in preserving the memory of Bing Crosby's many talents. Membership fee is \$10 per calendar year in the United States and Canada, \$15 per calendar year elsewhere, payable in advance in US funds or their equivalent. No foreign bank drafts, or foreign currency accepted. Mail to the address listed above.

BINGANG is always eager to welcome new writers to its pages. Submit your article to the Editor, at the above address. It need not be in typewritten form - handwritten is acceptable. Necessary corrections will be made here, and full credit given to the author. Material accepted for publication may not be reprinted elsewhere for 18 months.

There they rest - two pieces of paper - mementos of past theater shows which had become part of memories of earlier, happier days. One was a Sacramento theater program, which I had acquired by attending the show it referred to. The other was a program from one of San Francisco's leading theaters, which had only recently been given to me by a friend who knew of my collecting interests. Each, in its way, represented golden days of entertainment, which were enjoyed without knowing that "looking back" would give added value to these slight pieces of paper which seldom if ever were preserved - yesterday's theater program!

I can't recall just why I preserved the program from the Sacramento theater - except that it might have been the person with whom I saw the show. Perhaps it was an attempt to retain some flavor of that date that caused the program to go between the pages of a book, where it would remain for over fifty years.

It couldn't have been any one sterling act on the stage, for the only one that memory can dredge up any recollection of is the act listed as "Joe Peanuts and his Simian Gigolos - the Brazilian Monkey Jazz Band" and even at that pre-Ed Sullivan date, performing monkeys had no appeal for me. Certainly, it wasn't the closing act, for like all other theater buffs of the day, when the final act came on to the stage, we were afoot, and on our way out. If management had held them for the finale, well and good. Management knew what it was doing, as we never felt any loss by walking out on the final act. Therefore, all I can tell you of it is just what appears on the creased, yellowed page of the Sacramento Radio-Keith-Orpheum Theater for the week ending February 13, 1926:

Act H: BOB HOPE - The Enemy of Depression and
the Hope of a Nation, With
LOUISE TROXEL, ANN GILLEN
and EDDIE MCCARTHY

EXIT MARCH - Pop Glenn and his R K Olions

Just a few months ago, Bob Hope appeared here at a "benefit" for which he was paid \$50,000 just for appearing with a few of his tired jokes. What a difference just a few years - actually, half a century - can make! Wish I had stayed in my seat!

Now as to the second program, the one from San Francisco. Less than one hundred miles away, it wasn't unheard of for the real affluent youth of Sacramento to drive to "the City" to take in a show, and Loew's Warfield was one of our favorites - it was close to adequate parking - all day, indoors, valet-parked, for 25¢ - and the bill always had a good stage show. The Warfield was managed by West Coast Theaters, whose stage shows were developed and staged by Fanchon and Marco. The printed program for this week might be of interest to those of you who weren't fortunate enough to be of the generation which took such things for granted. The pit band played an intermission while you were being seated; then, a short comedy, Al St. John's "Live Cowards"; a short film special "Strange Happenings Caught By The Camera"; then, a musical interval by the band - at this show their effort presented selections from "Carmen" and "The Wind Blew Through His Whiskers". Then, a musical "Idea" staged by Fanchon and Marco, entitled "Syncopation Ideas". This was followed by another film short, "Topics of the Day", compiled by Literary Digest (now there was a magazine!) Then the feature film, "The Torrent", starring Ricardo Cortez, Greta Garbo, and actors and actresses you never heard of.

But let's return for a moment to the printed program, and see what the Fanchon and Marco presentation offered:

SYNCPATION IDEAS

An "Idea" staged by Fancho and Marco
with the following cast:

CROSBY & RINKER, Bobby Thompson and
Doreen Wilde, Dan Payne, Mae Curry, Mabel
Hollis, and the 16 Lightning Flashes -
Fancho and Marco's own Steppers!

This was one stage show I saw all of, but for the life of me, there is no recollection of Bing, or of Al Rinker. They headlined the show, and they must have been "wowsers", for this was a period of nothing but all-forward steps for the duo. But you couldn't prove it by those of us who saw the show, and who are still around. Of course, this was even before "I've Got The Girl" recording session, and Crosby and Rinker were just two names on a program to those of us in the audience. I'm sure we enjoyed their performance, but we may be forgiven for not being aware of the eminence that was to be achieved by one of the two young fellows up there on the stage.

Ah, yes, but the programs give us the tie to the past that memory cheats us of. We were there, and now we know how lucky we were, sixty years ago!

Here's a Bing movie that many of you may not know of. It was called to our attention by member Gene Dorenbusch.

The Mirisch Video Company has produced an attractive packaging of Bing's 1970 television appearance, together with his wife, Mary Francis, and Nathaniel, in the live-animated tale of "Goldilocks". My copy is identified as VHS 601203, and we presume it is also available if Beta.

This television outing has also resulted in a 12" album which most of you are familiar with. But this gives you a chance to see Bing in a happy moment with his young children. The color is beautiful, Bing looks fine, and the transfer to video cassette is very well done. Better write and ask for current price!

I purchased my copy from FAMOUS FILMS, INC. Causeway Plaza, 12155 Biscayne Blvd., North Miami, Florida 33181. You may be able to order the cassette through your local TV cassette outlet, but if you order from Famous Films, be sure to add on enough to cover postage. Two Dollars and a half ordinarily covers first class postage on a cassette anywhere in the United States and Canada.

You'll enjoy this little film and its gentle message to children (and grown-ups, too!) Bing, Mary Frances and Nathaniel meet some un-Disney-like animals. The story isn't hoked up as much as you'd expect.

Slowly, some of Bing's treasures filter down to us.

There's much to be said about being lucky. Member Don Eagle calls our attention to the late Ray Milland's auto-biography, which tells of a night when several hundred people were lucky enough to see and hear an incident which could not have been arranged in advance for any amount of money. Those present on the night in question were indeed lucky!

Now for a quote from Milland's book:

"Sunday Night at the Grove happened once a month, and the place would be lousy with celebrities, all fighting for the chance to get up and do a little entertaining. It was impromptu, of course, and all of them just a tiny bit shy and just the slightest bit reluctant. But just *try* and get the b-----s off!!

We found ourselves seated at a minute table at the top of the stairs on a balcony facing the orchestra. I've been told the room has been completely remodelled within the last few years. I've not been there recently, so for the all-hair and no-bra group I would like to describe it as I first saw it. For a room devoted to good food and good music, it was huge. I imagine it seated about four hundred. In the center was a large dance floor with the bandstand on the left as one entered. Scattered among the tables were tall coconut palms with monkeys hanging from them in all sort of attitudes, some of them with lighted eyes, that blinked. The rear wall was a huge panorama of a tropical island with an impossible silver moon suspended there. The tables were individually lighted and the waiters dressed in tuxedos, the orchestra was Gus Arnheim's, whose vocal group was the three Rhythm Boys - Bing Crosby, Harry Barris, and Al Rinker. It was quite a room. On this night it was packed, and on the floor level black tie was de rigueur.

I won't attempt to describe the whole evening, because I didn't know most of the performers and a lot of it was dreary. But there were three high spots for me, the first being when Grace Moore sang "Mimi", standing at her table to the accompaniment of the orchestra's xylophonist. Incredibly beautiful. Another was when W. C. Fields was tenderly escorted up onto the stage and demanded three cigar-boxes which he proceeded to juggle brilliantly, except that the middle one would occasionally drop to the floor. He would pick it up with the other two and go on with increasing rage, until he reduced them all to matchwood. Then he threw the debris into the piano and stalked off, demanding to see the madame of this house of joy. Quite hilarious.

The third and most moving happening of the night was the final one. I thought it was an odd choice until I remembered this was Sunday. One of the Rhythm Boys, the blond and lackadaisical one named Bing Crosby, stepped to the microphone and in a surprisingly fine baritone started Gounoud's "Ave Maria". Immediately there was a hush; not even a plate moved. It is not a long piece, and is usually reprised. When he came to the reprise, I heard a soprano softly drift in from a table near the stage. Toward the end, both voices came in full and when they finished, the hush remained. I looked at Asher, my companion, but he didn't know I was there. He was rapt, transported. Then the roar started, chairs were pushed back and people stood, and the applause was deafening. It was so emotional, and to me, strangely reassuring. As we were saying goodnight, I asked Asher if he knew who the soprano was. It was Lily Pons."

What would you pay for a video cassette of the incident?

We have received the following letter from Steve Hoffman A&R Manager for MCA:

"Pending any legal snags, I have great news for you! There will be two Bing Crosby compact laser discs released by MCA Records in late 1986. The first will be a "greatest hits type" compilation called "BING CROSBY SINGS AGAIN". It will also contain two unreleased masters. The other disc will be a compilation of Bing's best Christmas Songs. It will also include as a bonus track, the Christmas greeting to Decca employees in New York from Bing, Jack Kapp, Connee Boswell, Victor Young and Bob Crosby, from December, 1941.

These discs are going to look and sound great! I will use all the original source material in making the mono digital transfers.

Please keep in mind that this will be a compact disc release only, I do not have any release dates for you yet; I just wanted you to knowoooooooooooooooooooo word that this is probably going to happen.

If you have any questions, please feel free to write to me MCA Records"

Since receiving this letter, the two discs referred to have reached the local record shops throughout the land, and together with a prior "Bing "N" Basie" CD Disc, makes a grand total of 3 discs that all Crosby collectors will be unable to play without the expenditure of several hundred dollars for a CD player. You might like to write to Steve Hoffman about this!

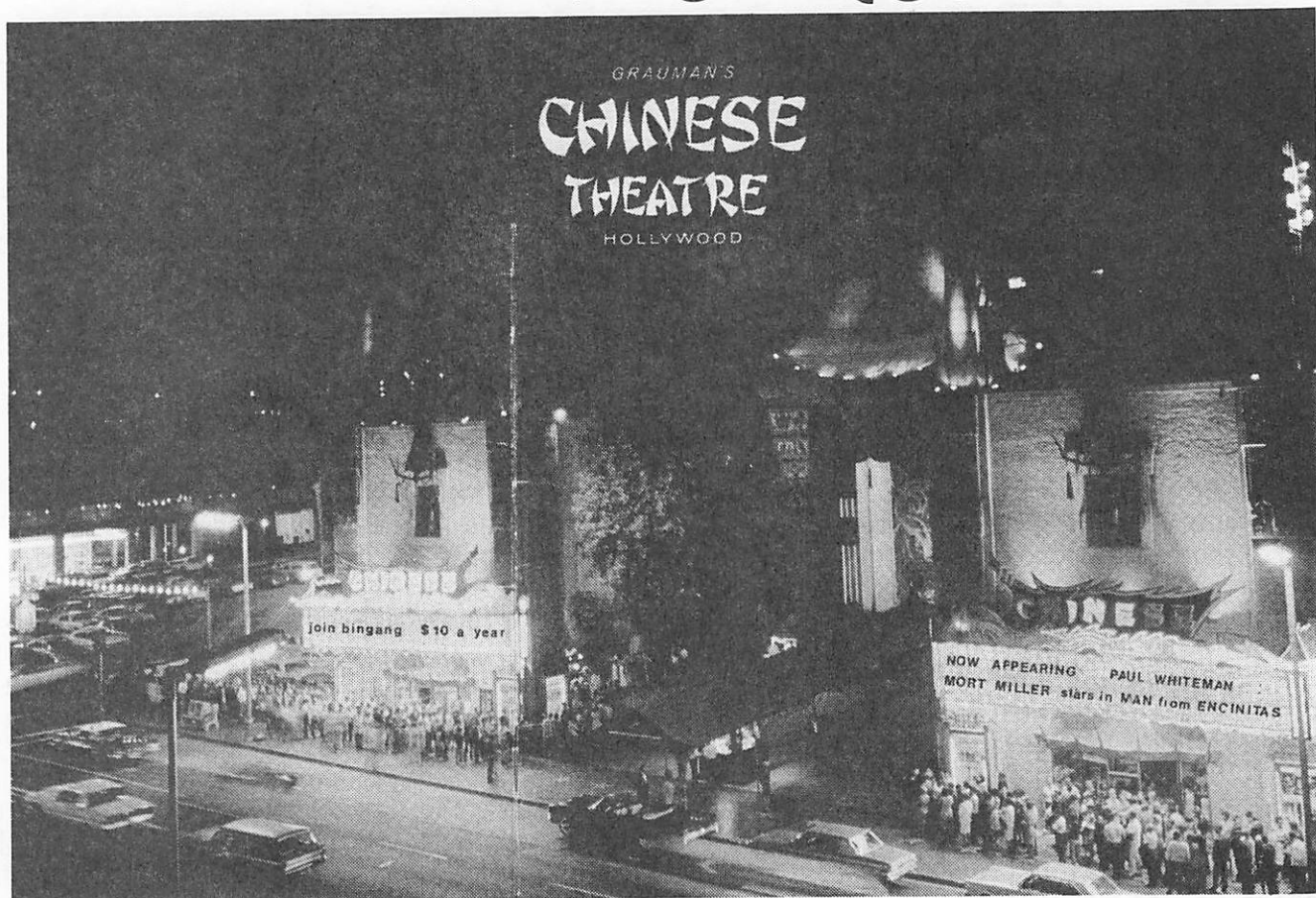
Before we get too upset about these latest releases being only on CD, perhaps we should take a look at the contents of the "Greatest" songs disc first: The Old Spring Fever(?); Dear Hearts and Gentle People; Beyond the Reef; Swingin' on a Star; Blue of the Night; (1931); I'm an Old Cowhand; Welcome to My Dream; Smarty; Moonlight Becomes You; What's New; I'm Through With You - You? it sounds just like its "I'm Through With Love"; Blue Skies; and a couple of others. All are well known, and the real Crosby fan has them already in several different issues and reissues. Who need them again? And if the thought was to attract the person who doesn't already have an extensive Bing collection, there might well be better material to intrigue the uninitiated - for instance, why don't they reissue the 15 "Bing's Hollywood" as an introduction to real nostalgia? And everyone would go for those, I'm sure.

Anyway, Your Editor has purchased these, as he's one of these "Gotta Have Everything" persons.

Now about the records: the sound is nice and quiet, but as it is all mono, the advantage of digital transfer and laser reproduction is moot, at the best. Who minds how mono sounds in the original 78s? Mine reproduce just about as satisfactorily as the digital transfer, and look at the savings!

Also, there is the matter of having an original, and having a photo of an original picture. If you can't get it any other way, try CD. If you can find the original 78s, go for them and forget modern science - until something worthwhile comes along.

GRAUMAN'S CHINESE THEATER & ITS RITES OF RECOGNITION



For those of us old enough to remember being sent to the bakery outlet to purchase a loaf of day-old bread for a dime, there is little argument that many youthful memories grow increasingly remote with the relentless passage of time. Despite the inevitability of this lamentable fact, half a century has not dimmed the fond recollection of being taken to that magnificent edifice in the heart of Hollywood, known as Grauman's Chinese Theater.

It was during those twilight years of the Great Depression - and only on a very special occasion - that I would be driven those thirty-odd miles from our southern California coastline town to that impressive motion picture house with its flamboyant oriental decor. The infrequent ritual included an incomparable hot fudge sundae at good old C.C.Brown's ice cream emporium a few doors away.

The glamour and excitement once associated with the film capitol of the world was never more in evidence than it was at the world premier of a new motion picture held at Grauman's "Chinese". Replete with mink-laden actresses and tuxedo-clad leading men, and with a constant stream of arriving and departing Rolls - Royces, the grand opening of such films as "Trader Horn", "Broadway Melody" and "Farewell To Arms" was indeed a sight to behold.

In addition to its reputation for world premiers, Grauman's Chinese became a focal point for tourists with its hand and footprints of Hollywood's most illustrious stars, cast in cement in the forecourt of the theater. Visiting Hollywood and not stopping by this famous location was compared to touring Egypt and ignoring the pyramids.

And so it was, on a sunny day in May or June of the year 1936, that Bing Crosby, already a household name throughout the world, took a break from the set of "Rhythm On The Range". Still clad in his cowboy togs, he was driven from the Paramount lot to the Forecourt of the Stars at Grauman's Chinese Theater.

The photographs accompanying this story were reproduced from the extremely rare original photos taken from Bing's own personal photo album, that was sold to the highest bidder at the controversial San Francisco auction a few years ago. The author procured them from a record dealer who acquired them at the auction with an intention of further speculation.

A box office attraction to rival Hollywood's greatest stars, placing his hands in the wet cement of Grauman's Chinese forecourt was a significant milestone in the career of the Paul Whiteman alumnus. The event was indicative of the status that Harry Lillis Crosby now enjoyed in his early thirties. Modest as we know Bing was throughout his career, it must have been a moment of great pride for him. After all, he held on to those photographs commemorating the ceremony for over forty years.

Ironically, the Grauman's Chinese Theater footprint tradition originated by accident. In the spring of 1927, Sid Grauman took Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks Senior and Norma Talmadge to witness the progress being made in constructing his new theater which was to open in May. Upon alighting from the automobile, Miss Talmadge unwittingly stepped into some wet cement. The incident gave Grauman a brilliant idea. He asked Talmadge, Pickford and Fairbanks if they would honor him by placing their hand and footprints in the cement outside the theater; and thus, a world-famous tradition was born. Bing was, of course, a virtual unknown at the time, a member of Whiteman's Rhythm Boys with much potential. Nine years later, he, too, would be singled out by Grauman for this coveted honor.

Strangely enough, another nine years would pass before his film career would bring him back to Grauman's for yet another honor. He would be called to the stage of the theater to receive an Oscar for his performance in "Going My Way" from his good friend, Gary Cooper. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences honored Bing by voting him the outstanding male actor for 1944. His modest and grateful acceptance speech from the stage of Grauman's Chinese was pure, unadulterated Crosby:

"I'm surprised. I'm amazed. There's something to be said about the equality of opportunity in these United States. And you're certainly witnessing a practical demonstration of it in me receiving this award, because if Leo McCarey can take a broken down crooner like me and take me by the hand and lead me through a picture so deftly that I come up with this happy crockery here, why there's a chance for anyone. All you have to do is to get Leo McCarey, I guess. Now, if he can just find me a horse to win the Kentucky Derby, it will be the biggest parlay in history!"

The Academy Award ceremonies, dating back to 1929, were first held in the Biltmore Hotel. It was soon moved to Grauman's Chinese Theater, where the presentations were made for four decades. Expansion of the ceremonies forced moving the annual event to the Santa Monica Auditorium, and most recently, to the grand Dorothy Chandler Pavilion of the Los Angeles Music Center. It was from this last site that Bing launched his series of historic personal appearance concerts with his second family.

And yet, the old Grauman's Chinese (now Mann's) will always seem to be inextricably a part of the Academy Awards and Hollywood's halcyon days - the site on which Bing was recognized twice for his contributions to motion picture entertainment. We share in memory these proud moments with him.



Just before, and just after Bing pressed his hands into the waiting, wet cement. Note that the clean-up crew is totally inactive on the left-hand of the picture. The three participants assisting Bing are unidentified.

For the curious, Bing seems to be holding a "Q-Tip" in his mouth in both pictures. Its part in the activity is unknown.



Barry Fitzgerald, Ingrid Bergman, and Bing backstage after the ceremonies. Bing and Barry, together for the first of their three pictures together, were joined by Ingrid, who had won her Oscar for her outstanding performance in "Gaslight", a picture which lost to "Going My Way" as Best Picture of the Year. "Gaslight" garnered three Oscars, to "Going My Way"'s seven.

Ingrid, who was working with Bing on "Bells of St. Mary's" at the time of the Awards ceremony, quipped that she was glad she won an Oscar, since Bing and Leo McCarey, who were her co-star and director, respectively, wouldn't let her on the set if she hadn't won an Oscar also!

After Ingrid's joking about Bing and Leo McCarey's snobbish attitude toward an actress who hadn't an Oscar, it was only natural that the three should be photographed together.

This shot appears to have been made on the set of "Bells of St. Mary's". At least, Bing had had time for a change of clothing!

"Bells of St. Mary's" was in contention for Best Picture, and Ingrid as well as Bing were nominated for Best Actress and Best Actor, but lost out to Joan Crawford in "Mildred Pierce" and Ray Milland in "Lost Weekend".

But it is "Bells of St. Mary's" that you see on the Videocassette shelves today!



A Cornucopia of Crosbyana Collectibles

by.....**MARK SCRINGER**

Pictures of the items referred to in Mark's article appear on pages immediately following, and are number-coded to the codes given in the article. Incidentally, such items as are described herein would make wonderful Christmas gifts for a died-in-the-wool Crosby Collector! But where to look??????

You'll pardon my alliterative title, but I just couldn't think of one all-encompassing theme for this article that would permit me to include all the items I wanted to show in this issue of BINGANG. So, leaving continuity behind we'll begin another journey through the wonderful world of Bing collectibles.

The first item up is the sheet music cover for a song called "Dancing the Devil Away". "Lucky", the Broadway show it came from, featured the 1927 edition of the Paul Whiteman Orchestra in the pit and onstage, and therefore marks Bing's Broadway debut (albeit in a rather minor capacity). Thomas DeLong, in his book, "Pops", mentions that Bing and Al Rinker duetted on "Sam, The Old Accordion Man" as part of the show, but this song wasn't from the original score as listed on this cover (1).

Item two shows one of the many tributes paid to Bing during his long career - his face and figure captured for posterity as a paper doll! (2) Seriously, because of its age and because it was essentially a children's toy, these dolls are now very rare and expensive. The price guide from whence this picture came places the value at \$70.00 and up. This set, featuring the stars of "Holiday Inn" was published by the Samuel Lowe Company, in 1941, and that is all of the information I can provide about this unusual collectible. Happy hunting!

Somewhat along the same line was the Bing Crosby punch-out doll featured on a "Cunningham" radio tube handout. (3) This was one of a series that portrayed many of the top names in radio in the early 1930s. Cunningham was probably trying to put a face on the voices early radio listeners were picking up on their sets - said sets being worked, hopefully, by Cunningham tubes! This firm also put out small plaster of paris busts of several radio artists, including Bing.

The next two items (4) and (5) are early attempts by the "Victor Talking Machine Company" to describe the new and different sounding Crosby voice for prospective record buyers. I found these two items on green-stock envelopes which were provided to record stores to aid in filing and selling. In a few short years just the name "Bing Crosby" on the label would tell you all you needed to know about the record. Incidentally, the dates for each record are release dates with the actual recording date generally having taken place some months previous.

A much fancier sleeve accompanied the first releases by the newly formed "Decca Record Company" which began business in August of 1934. Bing and the Guy Lombardo Orchestra came over to Decca with Jack Kapp, who had been their recording director at Brunswick, and now was president of the fledgling company. Bing had the first two releases on the label, and Guy Lombardo had the next three. Decca figured to woo many depression-era record buyers with their 35¢ price tag, as most of the major record companies (Victor, Columbia, and Brunswick) were all charging between 50¢ and a dollar per record. The highlighting of the price on this jacket alone with the picture of the two major artists shows Decca as a triple-threat. (6)

Next up are three postcards I've picked up over the past year, and so they were not in my last postcard article (7), (8) and (9). The first shows the Webster School in Spokane Washington, where Bing attended Grade School. I have many post cards of Gonzaga in my collection, but I never expected, or even hoped to come across one featuring Webster! We all know Bing made his first recording with Don Clark and his Los Angeles Biltmore Hotel Orchestra. But not everyone knows that the recording session took place in the ballroom of that hotel. These two cards show interior and exterior views of this important stop in Bing's journey to fame and fortune.

The next item (eight, actually, but they are all grouped together for ease of identification) (10).- presents eight cigarette cards from England. Each is from a much larger set featuring many top movie stars of the 1930s and 1940s. They all came in packages of various brands of cigarettes, except the larger one which came with a carton purchase. Most have biographical data or short movie plot summarized on the back. I must profess ignorance of the existence of any others featuring Bing, although I have seen cards from sets other than these which picture some of Bing's contemporaries, so we must assume Bing made several other appearances via this media.

When a Bing Crosby Stamp is issued by the Post Office in the near future, it will be a great day in Crosbydom, but it certainly won't be Bing's first appearance in this medium. The stamps pictured were produced during the late 1940s and are part of a set portraying the "Best Actor" and Best Actress" Academy Award Winners. There was a similar set with portraits of the best supporting actors and actresses, and also a set with twenty to thirty stamps per sheet which featured movie stars gathered more or less alphabetically. Bing had one lone stamp in this latter set. One more recent entrepreneur decided to go a step further and give Bing an honor the government usually reserves for former presidents (11) and (12). Well, we can dream, can't we?

And so the time has come to close another chapter on Crosby collectibles. I hope you found some items of interest. It appears that this is the last article of mine to be edited by our chief Al Sutton (See editorial pages for a comment on this).

I would be remiss if I didn't take this time to thank him for his help with my articles over the years, and his encouragement to start writing them in the first place. For these things I will be always in his debt. I know we are all grateful for the time and care he put into each issue of BINGANG, to make sure it was the best thing going!



1



2

TAKE ME
OUT AND
STAND
ME UP!

Bing
Crosby



INSIST ON THE BEST

EVEN an engineer can't tell a good radio tube merely by looking at it. He has to see how it is designed and how it is made. The best and only guarantee that a tube is a good tube is the collective indorsement of millions of satisfied users . . . in other words, the reputation of the manufacturer. We handle the tubes whose leadership is recognized . . .

RCA Cunningham Radiotron

3

22700

(Daringly)

22700

June 5, 1931

(Daringly)

Dance Orchestra — fox trot — fast tempo —
accented rhythm — vocal refrain — tuneful —
"hot."

Cross Index—23276 Rhythm Kings.

One More Time—Fox Trot

Gus Arnheim and His Cocoanut Grove Orchestra

Thanks to You—Fox Trot

Gus Arnheim and His Cocoanut Grove Orchestra

Same Orchestra—another fox trot—slow tempo
—refrain sentimental in character.

4

21302

(Culicaris)

21302

April 27, 1928

(Culicaris)

Popular Trio of Comic or "Hollywood" Type—
stutter and babble effects, etc.—piano accom-
paniment whistlings.

Cross Index—21274 Whiteman's Orchestra.

From Monday On Paul Whiteman's Rhythm Boys

What Price Lyrics? Paul Whiteman's Rhythm Boys

Similar General Style—spoken passages.

5

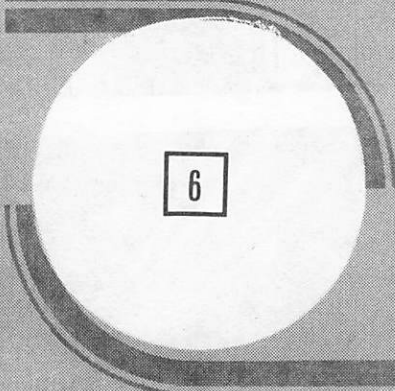


Decca

SUPREME RECORDS



BING CROSBY



6



GUY LOMBARDO

FOR
BEST RESULTS
USE
DECCA PERMO-POINT
or DECCA STEEL NEEDLES

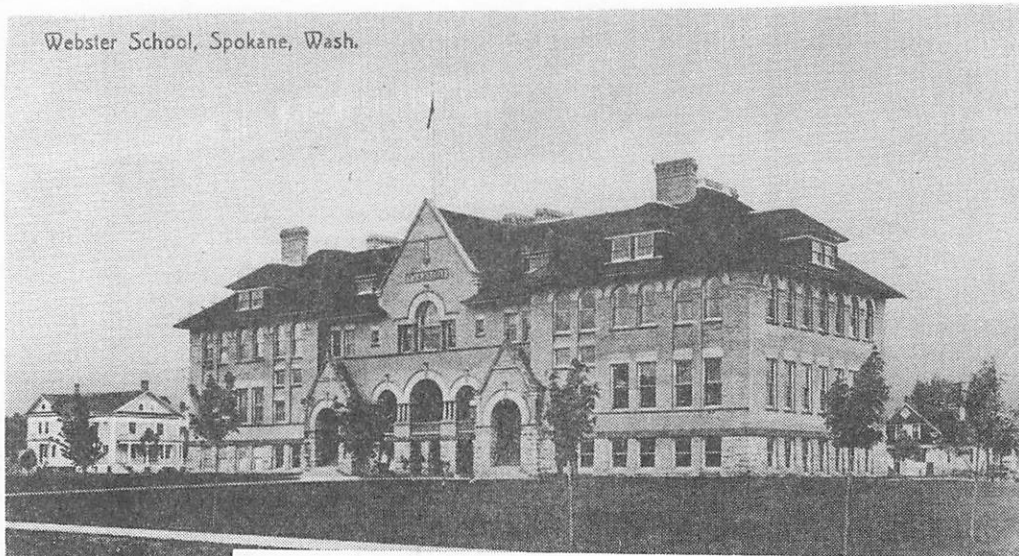
Your Dealer has them

THE
ALL-STAR RECORD
35¢

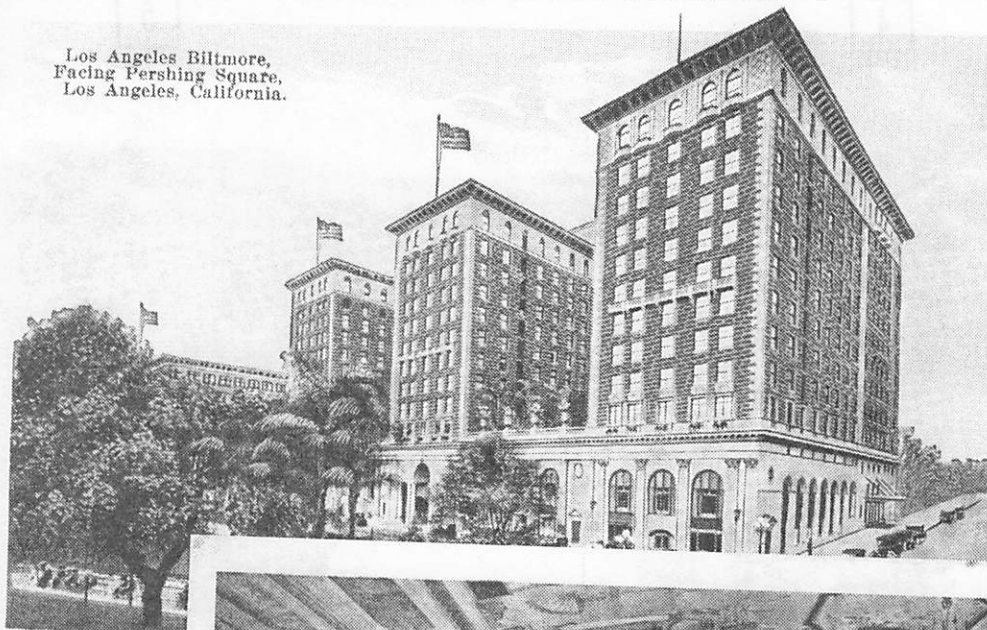
Ask your dealer
to play you the
New DECCA PORTABLE
PHONOGRAPH

The Finest Portable
Phonograph Ever Made

Webster School, Spokane, Wash.

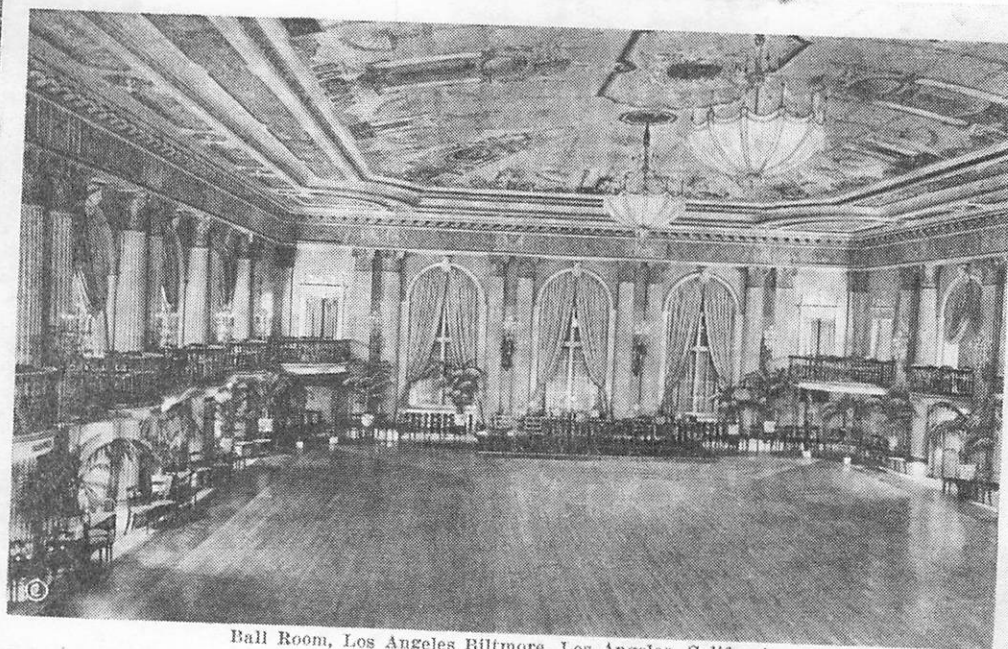


Los Angeles Biltmore,
Facing Pershing Square,
Los Angeles, California.



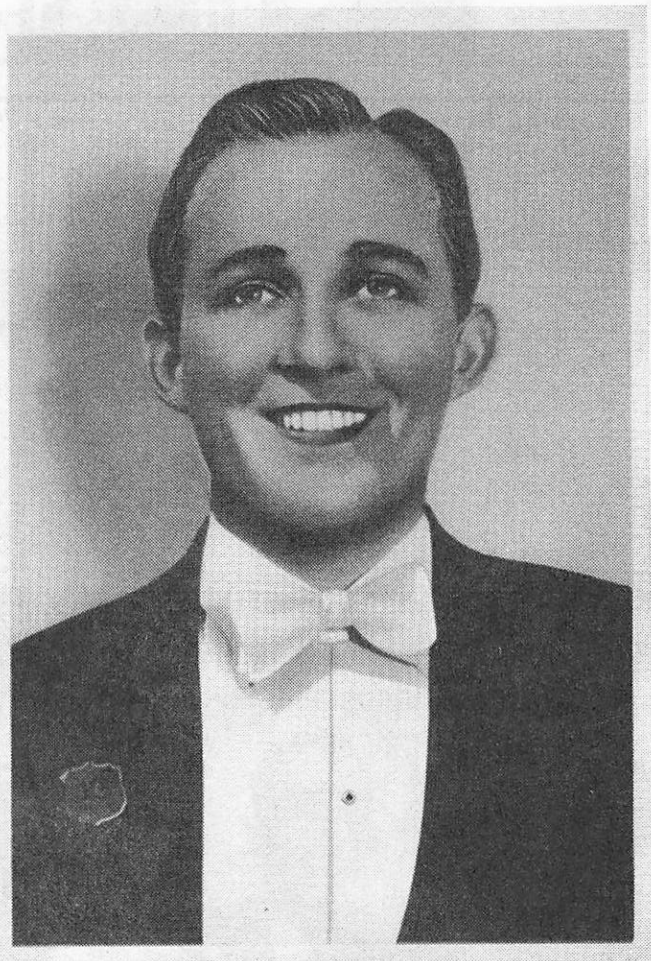
7

8

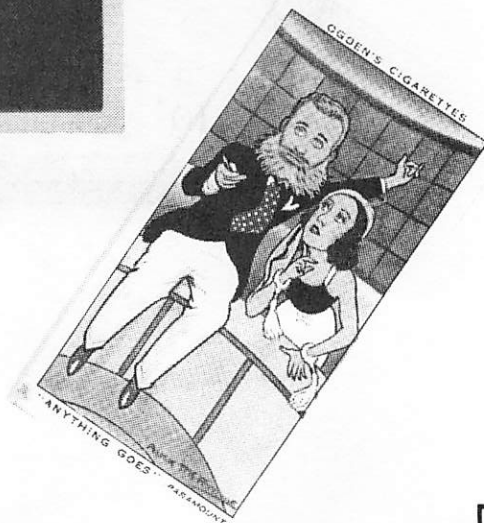


Ball Room, Los Angeles Biltmore, Los Angeles, California.

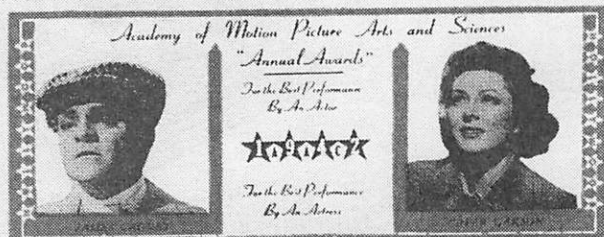
9



10



17

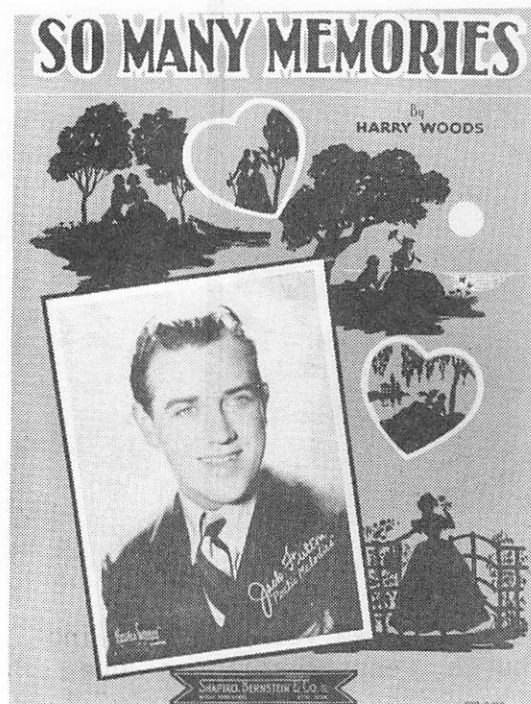


11

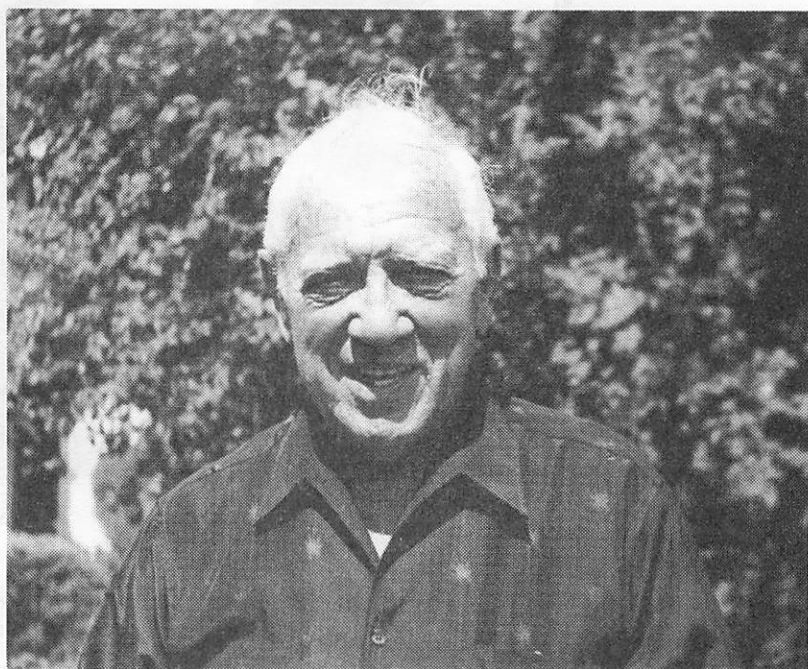


12

JACK FULTON RECALLS HIS OWN REMARKABLE CAREER, AND THOSE FRIENDS WHO MADE MUSICAL HISTORY —



It seems fitting that this sheet of old music should head this story.

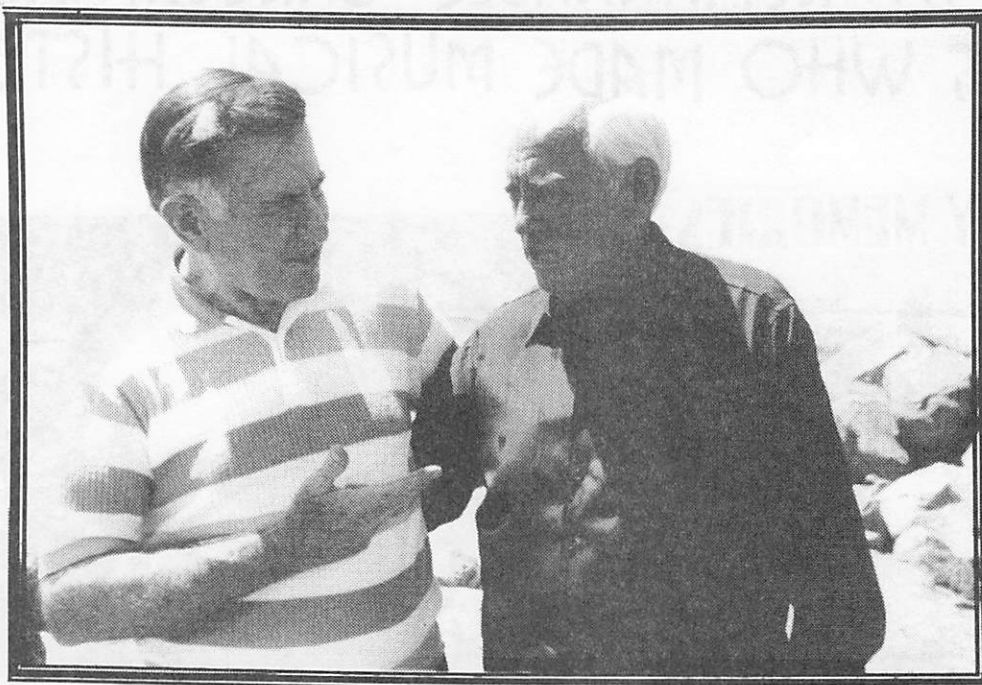


The years have been kind to Jack Fulton

Several years ago, when our good friend Herb Bootman was still with us, he informed your editor that Jack Fulton was alive and well in southern California; we laid plans to someday contact Mr. Fulton with the view of learning more about the Whiteman days. Herb's passing put that project on "hold", but when Mort Miller moved south a while back, it was a "natural" to suggest that he carry out this fine idea. This Mort has done, with rewarding results. He found Jack Fulton to be a warm and cooperative subject who was willing to talk about the "Old Days" with the Whiteman Orchestra; but Mort also found someone whose friendship he has come to value more and more each day. In the article that follows, Mort has organized their talks with emphasis on Jack's experiences mainly. A most satisfying story it is, and it puts the early days of popular music in clearer focus when we are told of these legendary persons as people with aspirations and problems much like those of everyone else. The desire to play music - - - but this is a story which had better be left to Mort and Jack.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Jack Fulton for being willing to share his memories with us; we owe an additional debt to Mort, for his seeking out this truly fine gentleman, and sharing his recollections with us.

BY MORTON B. MILLER



The Author and his subject

Jack Fulton first saw the light of day nearly eighty-three years ago, having been born in a small hamlet, outside of Phillipsburgh, Pennsylvania, on June 13, 1903. (*Editor's note: due to dilatory work by the editor, strike "nearly").* According to some recently released birth statistics on Bing, this would make Jack one month younger. As a matter of fact, Jack confided that he and Bing used to kid each other about who was the oldest when both were in the Whiteman Orchestra.

Fulton's singing career goes back to the days when he was only eight years old and a regular member of the local Episcopalian church choir. Jack enjoyed singing in the choir and continued to fill the church loft with his dulcet tones for the next seven years.

Jack's father played the euphonium (a tenor tuba) in the town's marching band. When the younger Fulton showed some interest in the musical instrument, his father bought Jack a trombone, since the euphonium was not considered an orchestral piece. Jack immediately displayed a natural ability in playing the trombone. Without the benefit of traditional music lessons - playing strictly by, as the term was called, "by ear" - the sixteen year old began playing in small dance bands in the environs of his hometown.

The promising trombonist became friends with Fred and Tom Waring, who lived only a few miles away in the town of Tyrone. On occasion Jack would miss the commuter train when returning from a Wednesday dance hall session in Johnstone, Pa. When this happened, he would bunk in for the night with the Waring brothers. The talented and ambitious Fred offered Jack a job with the Waring band, which consisted in these early days of two banjos, a piano, and a set of drums. Jack, however, was forced to decline as his father felt that he was too young and forbid him to join the Waring group.

Jack tells the story of the night that his father took him to the local theater to hear Paul Irvin's "Saxophone Pep Band" (an extravagant title, considering the fact that the band sported but one sax) from Altoona, Pa. Irvin's band had a highly competent trombonist named Al Sharp. Jack's father leaned over and admonished him,

"You'll never be with a band like this, because you won't practice enough!" It was paradoxical that within eight months, bandleader Irvin would, in fact, offer Jack a spot in his band! When the opportunity presented itself, Jack's father was out of town. His mother gave in to Jack's plea to joining Irvin, telling him "If that's what you want to do, go ahead and do it". The fledgling trombone player, not yet seventeen, quit school and became a member of Paul Irvin's outstanding group of musicians for three-and-a-half years. The decision was not a hard one for young Fulton, since he was propelled by a strong desire to get out of that small town in Pennsylvania.

It was during this sojourn with the "Saxophone Pep" band that Jack married his sister's best girl friend Thelma, a marriage that has lasted sixty-seven years. Jack's first playing date with Irvin was in Cumberland, Maryland. He was so unschooled to such matters that he had to have someone knot his tie for him. The band played six states, which included Virginia, New York, Ohio, Maryland, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania. After more than three years with the travelling musical group, the Fultons returned to the hometown. Jack planned to enter the laundry business with his father-in-law, but fate had something else in store for him.

The Mason-Dixon Orchestra happened to come through Phillipsburgh at about this time. It was made up of college students from the University of West Virginia and Ohio State University. It so happened that the band badly needed a trombone player for an engagement in Reading, Pa. to play for an American Legion ceremony. Since there were not that many qualified trombone players around at the time, Jack agreed to go with the Mason-Dixon collegiates for two weeks. He never came back to Phillipsburgh.

It should be pointed out that Jack had another important attribute going for him. He could sing. Very few bands had singers in the early Twenties. An exception was C.S. Wright's colored band from Columbus, whose vocalists used small megaphones. Austin "Skin" Young and Charlie Gaylord had been singing duets with the Mason-Dixon band before Jack joined the troupe. Young was an extremely handsome, dynamic and popular vocalist. With Jack's singing experience and ability, it was simply a matter of time before he would join Young and Gaylord to form a trio. Thus, the "sweet trio" of Paul Whiteman's world-famous Orchestra actually was singing vocal refrains as part of the Mason-Dixon Orchestra, several years before they joined up with "Pops".

The Mason-Dixon ended a tour at the swank Ambassador Hotel in Atlantic City. While appearing there, Young and Gaylord attended a party at which Whiteman was the guest. Fulton, who was married, did not make the party scene a great deal. Charlie and "Skin" sang a duet at the party and Whiteman hired them on the spot. They both told Jack what had happened, but he declined their suggestion to audition for Paul. Still somewhat insecure about his abilities, Jack wanted no part of the "big time" New York scene, preferring to return to Pittsburgh with the Mason-Dixon band.

It was about this time that bandleader Johnny Hamp repeatedly called Jack from New York and told him of a possible opening for a trombonist with the popular George Olsen Orchestra. Jack, still skeptical of his credentials to play in a premier orchestra and reluctant to move to New York, ignored the advice of Hamp. A now forgotten drummer with the Mason-Dixon band convinced Jack to change his mind. He told Jack that this was the biggest thing to happen to him, and he would be foolish not to grasp the opportunity. Looking back now, Jack believes that the decision to join Olsen was a crucial turning point in his career.

The year was 1925 when Jack joined the Olsen band, and they were the pit orchestra for the smash Broadway hit, "Sunny", starring Marilyn Miller and Clifton Webb. His concerns were quickly put to rest and he found himself more than qualified to play with the caliber of musician that Olsen had in his band.

Shortly after joining Olsen, Jack suggested to the bandleader that a vocal trio be formed for their next recording date with Victor. One of the songs selected was the number one tune from "Sunny", the memorable "Who?" The trio consisted of Jack, Fran Frey and Bob Rice. Their vocal helped make the George Olsen recording a smash hit across the nation. Interestingly, the song became identified with Olsen's band for the remainder of his career in show business.

Jack earned a handsome salary, for that period in the 1920s: over four hundred dollars a week. The Olsen band was not only playing for the Broadway production of "Sunny" but also for a "Skeets" Gallagher show at another theater, an engagement at the posh Pennsylvania Hotel, a night club on 54th Street, and sandwiched-in-between recording sessions. To maintain this frantic pace, band members alternated between riding taxi cabs and the subway.

Approximately four months after Fulton had signed on with Olsen, the Whiteman band arrived in New York. "Skin" Young and Charlie Gaylord tried to convince Jack to leave Olsen and join their ranks with Whiteman. The "King of Jazz" himself, came down to the theater to talk the situation over with Olsen. Whiteman insisted that he wasn't deliberately trying to pirate Jack away, but if the trombonist wanted to join his orchestra, he would be glad to have him. An amusing sidelight to this story was that George Olsen had been trying to get Fulton to persuade both Young and Gaylord to break their contracts with Whiteman in order to sign up with him. Jack gave his decision - he decided that he would sign with Whiteman. Olsen was furious and wouldn't talk to Jack after that, except to tell him that he was making a big mistake and would end up like a small fish in a big pond. Three important factors were involved in Jack's decision to leave Olsen. Due to the busy schedule of the Olsen band, Jack was coming home at three or four in the morning. There was precious little time to spend with Thelma. She told him that she didn't think their marriage would work out the way things were going. Secondly, the manner in which Olsen treated his musicians did not lie well with Jack, although he had no personal complaints. And, lastly, he was anxious to get together again with his two buddies from the Mason-Dixon orchestra, "Skinner" and Charlie. An added incentive was Whiteman's plans to take the orchestra to Europe on tour, and an opportunity for Jack and Thelma to have a belated honeymoon looked good. Another decision in Jack's career that he never lamented.

Jack signed his first contract with Paul in New York, then boarded a transcontinental train bound for San Francisco where the band fulfilled an engagement at an automobile show. He shared a suite with "Skin", Charlie, and Henry Busse at the St. Francis Hotel. The orchestra then moved to Coral Gables, Florida, for a five-week stint, followed by a week of recording for Victor in New York, before their crossing the Atlantic for their European adventure.

Although his weekly salary was cut in half when he was hired by Whiteman, Jack, in reflecting back on his career, never once regretted his decision. The eight years (1926-1934) that he spent with the Paul Whiteman Orchestra was a source of great satisfaction to him. At age twenty-three, the young man from an obscure little town in Pennsylvania, had reached the pinnacle of success and recognition in his chosen profession: musician and vocalist for the number one popular orchestra in the land - not bad for a lad who had never taken a music lesson in his life.

As a featured vocalist with Whiteman, Jack believes that his best effort was on a song entitled "I Wake Up Smiling". No one else recorded the tune, and Jack hit some phenomenally high note on the number. He considered himself to be a "high baritone" rather than a lyric tenor, despite his ability to hit those stratospheric notes. He revealed that he learned some of the technique of pitching his voice high from Austin Young. Jack recalls the shivers that went up his spine when he first heard "Skin" glide effortlessly from one high note to the next on "I Wonder What's Become Of Sally". Roy Bargy, pianist, encouraged Jack to try those high notes at the end of a song, utilizing his exceptional two-octave range.

The basic problem facing band vocalists in those days, according to Jack, was the often fast, staccato tempo of the arrangement. It was extremely difficult to sing a romantic or sentimental love ballad with the music paced at a galloping fox trot. Popular vocal recording artists, such as Al Jolson, Nick Lucas, Gene Austin, and Cliff Edwards could request the tempo that best suited their style and interpretation. Band singers were not so fortunate. The music was basically instrumental and "vocal refrain" meant the vocalists were incidental to the music. An excellent example of this was the time Fulton complained to Whiteman that he was having trouble singing the lyrics to the rapid tempo arrangement of the ballad, "My Blue Heaven". "Pops" told him to "hum it!" and that is how the song was recorded. Even on the song

"In A Little Spanish Town" which was a big hit for Jack, the tempo was much too fast to suit him.

Although he had become a proficient trombone player, Jack never had any instrumental solos while with whiteman. If he had been first or second trombone, it would have been impossible for him to leave his chair, in the middle of a song, and sing into the microphone. Besides, he was sitting next to some outstanding trombonists, which included Tommy Dorsey and Jack Teagarden.

When Jack left Whiteman in 1934, prompted by his desire to stay in one place and spend more time with his family, Paul presented him with a gold-plated pocket watch from the exclusive Cartier's. Each band member's signature was engraved on the back, with Johnny Mercer's at the top. On the face of the watch, replacing the twelve numerals were the letters of Jack's name.

The Fultons settled in New Jersey, where Jack was hired as the featured singer on a local radio show, broadcast five days a week, and backed by a small combo of fine musicians that included the former Whiteman saxaphonist, Chuck Hazlett. On Friday afternoons, Jack would fly out to Chicago to sing on a regional radio program, sponsored by Mabelline eye products, and titled "Penthouse Serenade". Commuting back and forth from New York to the Windy City became a chore, so Jack convinced his wife that they should pack up and move the family to Chicago.

It was while working with Sophie Tucker that Jack was approached by a representative of the Columbia Broadcasting System, to audition for a new radio program, sponsored by the Wrigley Chewing Gum Company. Facing some stiff competition, Jack was chosen to be the vocalist on the show, sharing time with the announcer, Franklyn McCormack, who read poetry that intertwined with Jack's songs. A twenty-piece orchestra supported Jack's vocal efforts. Still on the move, the popular singer would fly up to Minneapolis on Fridays to do the Hormel Broadcasts. Some years later, McCormack was replaced by the Andrews Sisters, who alternated the vocals with Jack. The handsome ex-Whiteman favorite was with CBS for over twenty-two years.

Jack Fulton's talents were not limited to singing or playing the trombone. He also had quite a successful song writing career. One of his biggest hits was a song entitled "Wanted", which had a catchy melody and some very clever lyrics. It was the most popular song of the year 1954, and was on the Hit Parade ten weeks. At first reluctant to record the song, Perry Como had a best seller. Another Fulton song success was the song "Until". Tommy Dorsey had to top recording on the charts. Some other of Jack's compositions included "If You Are But A Dream" (Frank Sinatra, Jimmy Dorsey, Sarah Vaughn, Roubert Goulet); "Ivory Tower" (Cathy Carr); "Wanting You" (Percy Faith); "My Greatest Mistake" (The Ink Spots); "Looks Like A Cold Cold Winter" (Bing Crosby); "Sweetie Pie" (McGuire Sisters); "Last Night I Said A Prayer" (Vaughn Monroe, Jimmy Dorsey); "Moody" (Jack Jones); and many others. Jack is the proud possessor of the ASCAP Award for the inspirational "Make America Proud Of You".

While in Chicago, Jack's multifaceted talents were also put to good use on the perennial Don McNeil's "Breakfast Club", a program that set records for longevity on the air. As a writer for the show, Jack had his own office at the network. It was during this period that Jack's close friend, Everett Crosby, tried to get Jack to come out to the West Coast, but his responsibilities to his family precluded such a move.

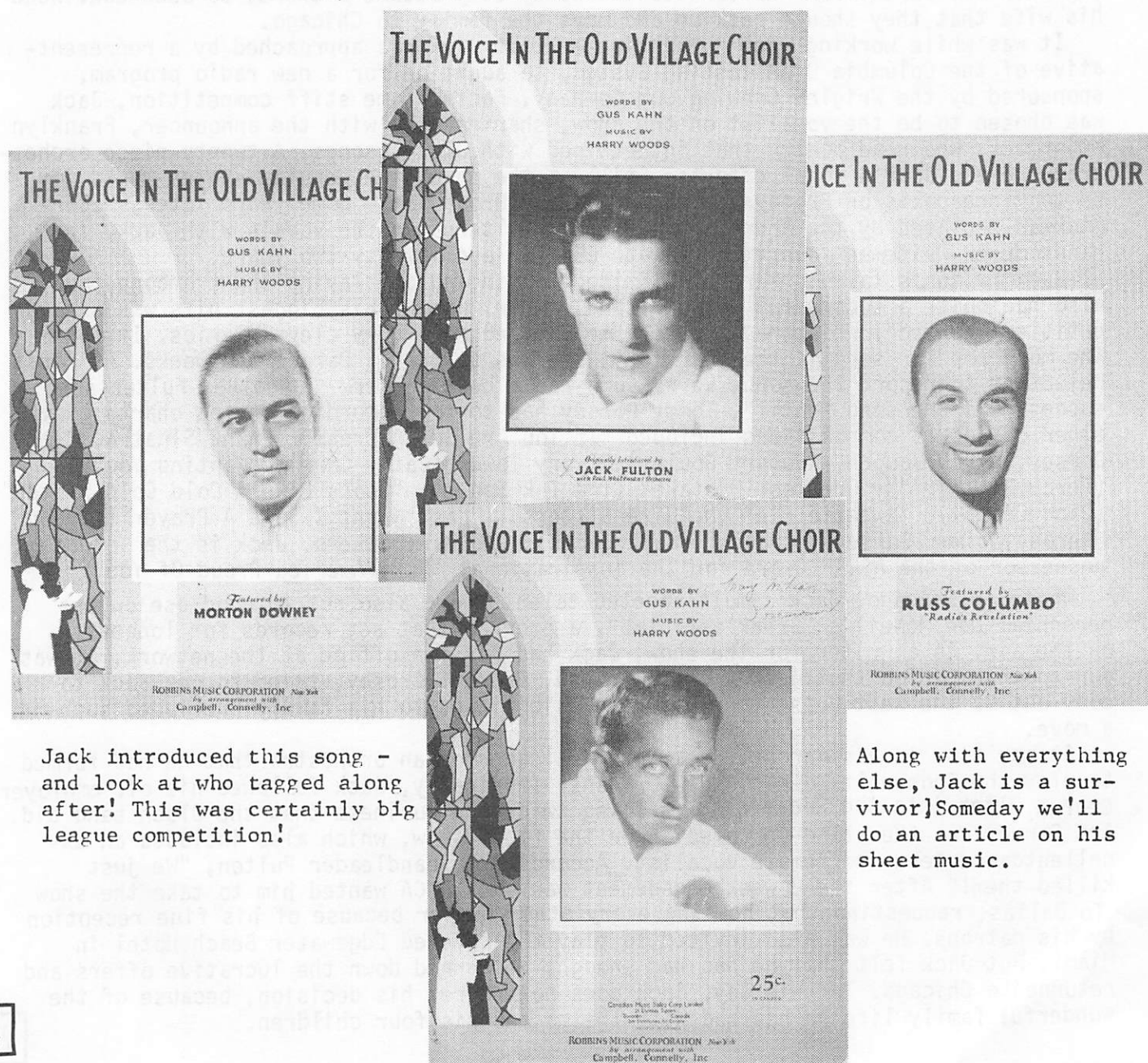
At one time in his career, Jack was the leader of an orchestra that he had formed to play the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans. Ironically, Jack followed his old employer George Olsen into the Roosevelt - doing twice the business that the Olsen band did. Art Carney was the stand-up comedian on the floor show, which also included an excellent dance team and female vocalist. According to bandleader Fulton, "We just killed them!" After the 8-week engagement was over, MCA wanted him to take the show to Dallas, requesting that he sing every other number because of his fine reception by his patrons. He was also invited to play the coveted Edgewater Beach Hotel in Miami. But Jack felt that he had had enough. He turned down the lucrative offers and returned to Chicago. To this day, Jack does not regret his decision, because of the wonderful family life he has had with Thelma and his four children.

Jack's unpretentiousness and modesty is disarming. He felt he never had the ability to get where he did with Whiteman's Orchestra, claiming that it was the result of a combination of fortunate "breaks". He points to, for example, what would have happened if he had not gone with George Olsen and had opted, instead, to join his father-in-law in a laundry business. In a reflective moment, he confided that he never aimed for the top. He was content to make the niche in show business that he did, never striving for heights beyond his reach.

Jack has been retired for a number of years now. He and his charming wife, Thelma, live a quiet life on the edge of a scenic golf course in Southern California. They often visit, or are visited by, their three sons and daughter, and their many grandchildren and great grandchildren. It has been a good life, filled with love and personal accomplishment.

That teen-age boy, who made those first tentative notes on the trombone his Dad had just bought him, nearly seventy years ago, had no way of knowing the pleasure and happiness he would bring to others.

Thanks for all the music you have made in your lifetime, Jack! For those soft mellow note from your trombone for countless songs that you have sung for us -and for the beautiful and inspirational songs you have written. Thanks!



Jack introduced this song - and look at who tagged along after! This was certainly big league competition!

Along with everything else, Jack is a survivor! Someday we'll do an article on his sheet music.

CONRAD S. JAVIER, who has been a member of Club Crosby for a long, long time, finds it necessary to sell his collection of Bing Crosby records. It is his preference to dispose of the entire lot to one individual if possible, but all interested parties should let their wants and needs be known to Mr. Javier.

Conrad's collection, while quite extensive, is not totally complete insofar as every single recording, in each of its formats, but it is quite extensive, and many many of the records are still in mint or near mint condition. Space here does not allow the listing of all his records, and it will be necessary for potential buyers to contact Mr. Javier direct. Please don't ask him to send you a listing, as his means of duplicating such a list is limited. However, he can and will give you a count by label, if you so ask.

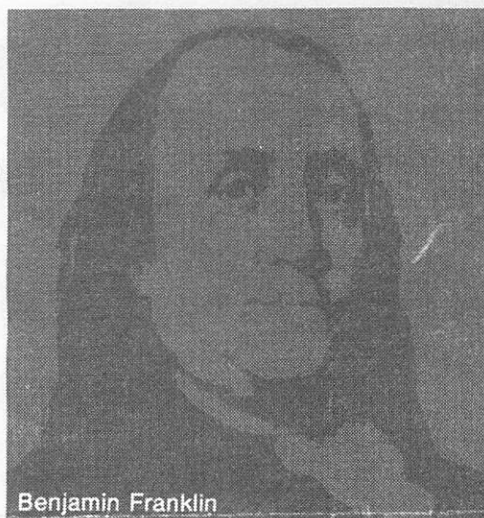
For those of you in the New York area, who might wish to view the collection in person, please contact Mr. Javier in writing to set up an appointment - no surprise visits, please.

We know the reluctance with which he moves toward disposing of his collection, so don't anticipate a "giveaway" - the purpose of the sale is to raise some cash, not to just get rid of some records.

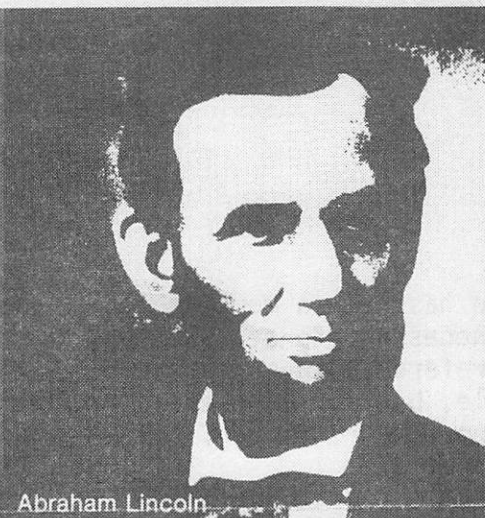
Address your communications in regard to this collection to:

CONRAD S. JAVIER
107 CHEPNEY ROAD
SYRACUSE, N. Y. 13219

They also served...



Benjamin Franklin



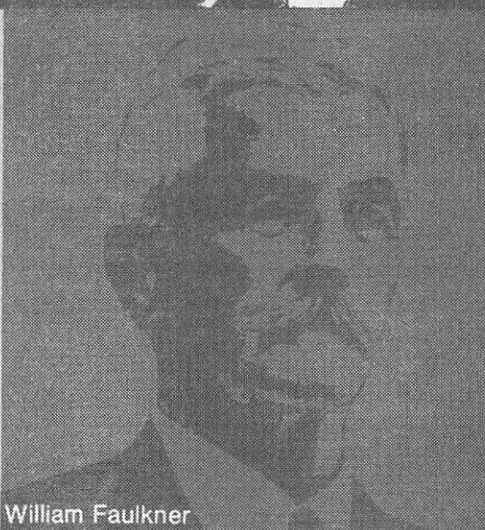
Abraham Lincoln



Harry Truman



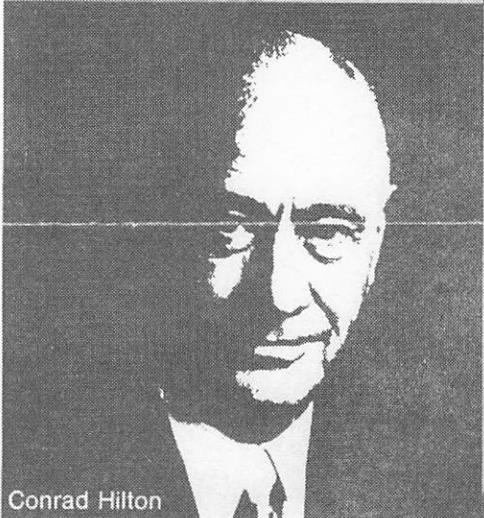
Fred Lindstrom



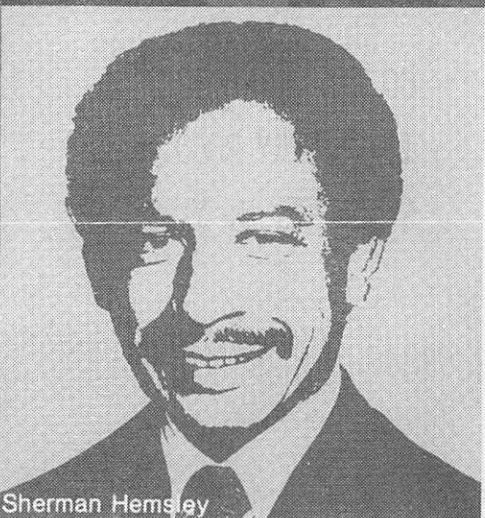
William Faulkner



Bing Crosby



Conrad Hilton



Sherman Hemsley



Knute Rockne

FRANKLIN: First Postmaster General LINCOLN: Postmaster, New Salem, IL TRUMAN: Postmaster, Grandview, MO LINDSTROM: Postmaster, Evanston, IL FAULKNER: Postmaster, University, MS CROSBY: Substitute Letter Carrier, Spokane, WA HILTON: Postmaster, San Antonio, NM HEMSLEY: Clerk, NYC and Philadelphia ROCKNE: Clerk, Chicago.

Employers all have their devices to help bolster the morale of the employees working for them. These devices take many forms, but they are usually supplemented by posters, prominently displayed in the work-place.

The U. S. Postal Service used the example on the opposite page to let their employees know of the famous personages who had at one time used the Post Office as a step upward in their careers. The famous personalities, and their jobs with the postal Service are:

BENJAMEN FRANKLIN - First Postmaster General
ABRAHAM LINCOLN - Postmaster, New Salem, IL.
HARRY S. TRUMAN - Postmaster, Grandview, MO.
FRED LINDSTROM - Postmaster, Evanston, IL..
WILLIAM FAULKNER - Postmaster, University, MS.
BING CROSBY - Substitute Letter Carrier, Spokane, WA.
CONRAD S. HILTON - Postmaster, San Antonio, NM
SHERMAN HEMSLEY - Clerk, NYC & Philadelphia
KNUTE ROCKNE - Clerk, Chicago

So, as the saying goes, it isn't where you start, its where you finish that really counts.

Working for the Post Office certainly didn't hold back any of these nine men, and that's the message Uncle Sam wanted to deliver to his Postal employees. How many of you knew Bing carried the mail?